The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. I. BOSTON, MARCH, 1893. No. 10

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 10.

AUNT PHILLIS'S GUEST 105
THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS 105
THE STILL HOUR 107
THE BIBLE CLASS 109
CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY 110
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 111
MISCELLANEOUS 116

AUNT PHILLIS'S GUEST.

I was young, and "Harry" was strong,
The summer was bursting from sky and plain,
Thrilling our blood as we bounded along,
Till a picture flashed, and I dropped the rein.
A black sea creek, with snaky run,
Slipping through low green leagues of sedge,
An ebbing tide and a setting sun,
A hut and a woman by the edge.
Her back was bent, and her wool was gray,
The wrinkles lay close on her withered face.
Children were buried or sold away,—
The freedom had come to the last of a race.
She lived from a neighbor's hominy-pot,
And praised the Lord if "the pain" passed by.
From the earthen floor the smoke curled out
Through shingles patched with the bright blue sky.
"Aunt Phillis, you live here all alone?"
I asked, and pitied the gray old head.
Sure as a child, in quiet tone,
"*Me and Jesus*, massa," she said.
I started, for all the place was aglow
With a presence I had not seen before;
The air was full of a music low,
And the Guest Divine stood at the door!
Ay, it was true that the Lord of Life,
Who seeth the widow give her mite,
Had watched this slave in her weary strife,
And shown himself to her longing sight.
The hut and the dirt, the rags and the skin,
The grovelling want and the darkened mind,—
I looked on this, but the Lord, within:
(I would what he saw was in me to find!)
A childlike soul, whose faith had force
To see what the angels see in bliss.
She lived, and the Lord lived,— so, of course,
They lived together. She knew but this.
And the life that I had almost despised
As something to pity, so poor and low,
Had already borne fruit that the Lord so prized
He loved to come near, and see it grow.
No sorrow for her that the life was done:
A few days more of the hut's unrest,
A little while longer to sit in the sun,
Then — *He* would be host, and *she* would be guest!
And up above, if an angel of light
Should stop on his errand of love some day,
And ask, "Who lives in this mansion bright?"
"*Me and Jesus*," Aunt Phillis will say.

A fancy, foolish and fond, does it seem?
And things are not as Aunt Phillis's dream?

Friend, surely so!
For this I know,—
That our faiths are foolish by falling below,
Not rising above, what God will show;
That his commonest thing hides a wonder vast,
To whose beauty our eyes have never passed;
That his *fact* in the present or the to-be
Outshines the best that we think we see.

— *W. C. Gannett.*

THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS.

The personal force is the nature of Jesus, full of humanity, full of divinity, and powerful with a love for man which combines in itself every element that enters into love of the completest kind. The inspiring idea is the fatherhood of God and the childhood of every man to him. Upon the race and upon the individual Jesus is always bringing into more and more perfect revelation the certain truth that man, and every man, is the child of God.

. . . . . .

And so the power of Jesus is the idea of Jesus multiplied and projected through the person of Jesus. His power is not in the

miracles that he did, not even in the marvellous nature which he bore, but in the great truth, the primal and final fact of all the universe, so far as man has any part in it, which the whole nature of the Saviour uttered, and with whose splendor every miraculous touch of that nature on the world, or on man's body or man's soul, burst forth into light.

. . . . . .

I see the sun break in with a triumphant burst of light upon a chamber set with countless jewels, but which has thus far been wholly shut up in the dark. There is a double joy, I think, in the great heart of the sunlight, as, almost with a shout that one can hear, it floods the opened chamber with itself. First, it finds new interpretation of itself, it finds itself, as it were, in the new stories of its glory which the jewels tell, as, one by one, they burn under its touch; and, second, it feels every jewel quiver under its fiery hand with the transporting discovery of its own nature. I see a good man, long shut out from human company, come among his brethren with a leap and burst almost like the sunshine: he casts his solitude behind him, and flings himself into their sympathies and hopes. I let the explanation of it at first rest in the mere unexplained instinct of humanity; but, when I come to analyze his motive to its elements, I know that it must be made up of these two impulses, the desire of self-knowledge and the desire of illuminating others, the desire of burning and the desire of shining, which are the two strong, ineradicable passions of the soul. The man goes into the multitude that he may find himself, and that he may declare them to themselves. All human society which has not these impulses more or less consciously within it is but the herding of animals for the mere fear of being alone or the mere joy of being together.

. . . . . .

The flower opens on the stalk; but the flower is not the life, for you may pluck it off leaf by leaf, and the plant still lives. The stalk builds its strong fibre; but its fibres are not life, for they may all be perfect, and the plant be dead. The hungry roots reach out into the fertile ground; but the roots are not life, only wonderful channels to bear the life that has been given them. Not until you see the earth give itself to the plant, and, turning into sap, send itself through the waiting veins until it flushes into color far up in the air,—not until then have you gone back where you can go back no farther, and really found the life. So here is the perfect flower of the life of Jesus. It is the blood-red flower of the cross. Is that pain life? Surely not. The thief beside him bears pain, too; and we can call it only death. Is life, then, the experience that brings the pain? The injustice of the rulers, the mocking of the people, the brutality of the soldiers,—is that his life? No, surely not. The deadest soul might have encountered all of these experiences. Is it, then, that deep compulsion that lay underneath it all? Is it that necessity which has been on him all his days that he should do his Father's will, that compulsion which has brought him to the cross? Not yet have we attained the life, for mere obedience may be mere death. But behind all there lies the idea of Jesus that God is his Father, and that he may make these men know that he is their Father, too. When that is touched, behold the miracle! See how the dry roots of obedience fill themselves with love; see how the hard stalk of experience grows soft and pliable with purpose; and then see how the flower of pain utters a life profoundly deeper than itself, and tells the world that story which it is the struggle of all pain and pleasure in the career of Christ to tell, which all healthy pain or pleasure in the career of man is tempting him to learn,—of man's unbroken sonship to his Father, of the belonging of his soul to the soul of God.

. . . . . .

The character of Christ's own reforming spirit was clear enough. He said that he wanted not to destroy, but to fulfil the agencies which he found here in the world. He never cared to reshape circumstances until he had regenerated men. He let the shell stand as he found it until the new life within could burst it for itself. It is very wonderful to me to see how thoroughly his disciples caught his method. They could not have caught it so completely and so soon if it had not been that it was based on a large principle, if it had not been more

than a special trick or tact. Almost instantly, as soon as the disciples began their work, they seem to have been filled with a true conception of its divine method,—that not from outside, but from inside; not by the remodelling of institutions, but by the change of character; not by the suppression of vices, but by the destruction of sin, the world was to be saved. That truth with whose vitality all modern life has flourished, with the forgetfulness of which all modern history has always tended to corruption, that truth only dreamed of by a few spiritual philosophers in the ancient world,—it is one of the marvellous phenomena of human thought that it should have leaped full-grown to life with the first influence of Christianity. A few faint flutterings about the old methods of repression, and the disciples of Jesus settle at once to the new methods of development.—*Phillips Brooks, Bohlen Lectures.*

THE STILL HOUR.

OUR MASTER.

Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above:
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth Love.

Blow, winds of God, awake and blow
The mists of earth away!
Shine out, O Light Divine, and show
How wide and far we stray!

Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear:
Why forward reach or backward look
For love that clasps like air?

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For him no depth can drown.

And not for signs in heaven above
Or earth below they look,
Who know with John his smile of love,
With Peter his rebuke.

In joy of inward peace or sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is his own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain:
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame;
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with his name.

O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noonday sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee
The Light, the Truth, the Way!

The homage that we render thee
Is still our Father's own;
No jealous claim or rivalry
Divides the Cross and Throne.

To do thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds;
And simple trust can find thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

No pride of self thy service hath,
No place for me and mine;
Our human strength is weakness; death,
Our life, apart from thine.

Apart from thee all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of thy cross
Is better than the sun.

O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.

Our thoughts lie open to thy sight;
And naked to thy glance
Our secret sins are in the light
Of thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress,
  Thy tender light shines in;
Thy sweetness is the bitterness;
  Thy grace, the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,
  Thou dost our service own;
We bring our varying gifts to thee,
  And thou rejectest none.

To thee our full humanity,
  Its joys and pains, belong;
The wrong of man to man on thee
  Inflicts a deeper wrong.

Who hates, hates thee; who loves becomes
  Therein to thee allied;
All sweet accords of hearts and homes
  In thee are multiplied.

Deep strike thy root, O heavenly Vine,
  Within our earthly sod,
Most human and yet most divine,
  The flower of man and God!

Alone, O Love ineffable!
  Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from thee is hell,
  To walk with thee is heaven!

Not thine the bigot's partial plea,
  Not thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of thee
  Which ends in hate of man.

Our friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
  What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
  But simply following thee.

We bring no ghastly holocaust,
  We pile no graven stone;
He serves thee best who loveth most
  His brothers and thy own.

Thy litanies, sweet offices
  Of love and gratitude;
Thy sacramental liturgies,
  The joy of doing good!

Do we take delight in approaching to God? Are we not too much absorbed in things that perish in the using? Have we not some weak points that need strengthening? some vulnerable places in the wall of character, where the tempter has made a breach before, and will again, if we are not on our guard? Do we all live as we believe? I know one who does not, and who would keep Lent with you in the hope that it may help him in coming a little nearer to living as he believes all the year round. So this Lent shall be to us not a season of darkness, but of light, of getting and giving light, and, instead of sackcloth and ashes, let us put on the garments of praise.

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward."

Suppose we say to ourselves: Not a day of Lent shall pass in which we do not read some word of Jesus, some precept, some act of mercy and of love, that so we may touch the hem of his garment and be "healed immediately."

Jesus found the way to God, and waits to show that way to us. He saw the truth of God, and seeks to show it to darkened minds. He lived the life divine, and calls on every child of God to follow. Man is God's child,—not an adopted, but an own child, born out of the bosom of divine Love, bearing the Father's image and likeness; and, though he wanders oft in dark and tangled paths, God loves him still, and ever seeks to win him back from sin and its retribution to goodness and its blessed rewards.

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
  With all thy quickening powers,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
  In these cold hearts of ours.

. . . . . .

"Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
  And that shall kindle ours."

The fire we need must be kindled on our own altars. May the heavenly Father, who is our life, and the spirit of his dearly beloved Son, and the communion of all holy influences keep our souls on fire with the purpose of being followers of God as dear children!

John's voice was sharp and clear. Repent; return; face the sunrise; open your eyes; leave off sinning; live in the light of God. Jesus hears the voice. It has been borne on the swift wings of a thousand tongues to Nazareth, sixty miles away. He hastens to the Jordan, and steps forward and asks of John for baptism. How can John do it? John's voice was not for him. But Jesus says persuasively, "Suffer it to be so now," and they both go down into the

water. As they came up, Jesus prayed. Of that prayer, in such an hour, from such a soul, at the opening of such a ministry, would we knew the words! but it was made to God, not for man. Heaven was opened, and the Dove of the Spirit rested on him, and a voice was heard, "Thou art my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased." John was a voice. Jesus was a life. John came to preach the kingdom of heaven at hand. Jesus came to build up that kingdom in the world.

O blessed Jesus! Shall we ever know him?

Jesus stood up in the synagogue of his native Nazareth, and held the sacred roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. He unrolled the parchment until he came to the sixty-first chapter of the roll. Here he read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." The Spirit had spoken to him: he felt its anointing. Behold, the Great Teacher! The work which Christ came to do for the soul is not the work of an hour or a day. It is the work of a life. Reverently to receive him as the soul's teacher is the beginning of the work. The central word in this new gospel is love; for *gospel* means glad tidings, and glad tidings without love were impossible, for love originated the tidings, and love made them glad. Healing, sight, and liberty! gracious words these, to rich as well as poor, to those at ease as well as to those in trouble. Jesus does not come to take the place of God. He comes to take us by the hand, and lead us to his Father and our Father.

"Come, for all things are now ready."

Ready for whom? For you and for me, and for everybody the wide world over. Ready for what? For our best, our very best. The supper is ready, the table is spread. There is food for all on the Father's table.

The supply is inexhaustible. Come! Come! there is truth for the mind, there is love for the heart, and peace for the soul. Come! Would any thoughtless one offer an excuse for not coming to this feast? Excused from what? From the love of God? From purity of heart? From holiness of life? They do not see that it is an invitation to a feast as rich as God's love can make it. The feast is spread. He who sits at the head of the table, that dear Son of God, repeats the invitation of our Father with sweet, persuasive voice,—

"Come, for all things are now ready."

—"*Leaflets for Lent*," *W. P. Tilden.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

ANSWERS TO NOVEMBER QUESTIONS.

1. Which Gospel gives an account of some of the doings of Jesus before his public ministry?

Ans.—The Gospel of John.

2. Which two of the evangelists were also apostles?

Ans.— Matthew and John. John became a follower of Jesus earlier than Matthew.

3. Which was a priest?

Ans.—John.

4. Which a tax-gatherer?

Ans.—Matthew.

5. Which a physician?

Ans.— Luke.

6. Which Gospel is supposed to have been written last?

Ans.—That of Luke.

7. Where is Mark supposed to have obtained material for his Gospel?

Ans.—From Peter, whose friend and companion he was.

8. Which are called the three "Synoptical Gospels," and why?

Ans.—Matthew, Mark, and Luke, because they treat the history of Christ in very nearly the same manner.

9. Which of these three Gospels has several chapters containing an independent narrative not repeated in either of the others? and where does this portion begin and end?

Ans.—Luke, beginning Luke ix. 57, and ending Luke xviii. 14, thus including about nine chapters.

10. What two important passages are contained in this section of the history of Jesus?

Ans.—The parable of the Prodigal Son and the parable of the Good Samaritan.

11. Which of the evangelists emphasizes the character of Jesus as a reformer of Jewish law? Which sees him most as the expected Messiah? Which most presents him

as teaching the central truths of Christianity (the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man; the new idea of God, including in his love saint and sinner, Jew and Gentile)?

Matthew sees Jesus as the reformer of Jewish law; Mark as the expected Messiah; Luke as a great religious teacher, teaching something new about God and about man.

See Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew. See also chap. xii., the story of the walk in the cornfield, and the healing of the withered hand on the Sabbath; also chap. xv. 1–20, and other passages.

Mark's Gospel emphasizes the miracles, death, resurrection, and Messiahship of Jesus as the descendant of David.

Luke's Gospel is evidently written by one who has a clearer idea of the thoughts and aims of Jesus. See the parables of the Prodigal Son and of the Good Samaritan, the parable of the Pharisee and publican, of Dives and Lazarus; the story of the woman who loved much because her sins were forgiven; the rejection of Jesus by his fellow-townsmen; the account of Zaccheus, the publican.

"If we compare these passages, we shall find they have a common element. They all refer to the universal love of God for Jew and Gentile, Samaritan and publican, the good man and the sinner."

12. What is the especial value and charm of the Gospel of Mark?

Ans.— The picturesqueness and graphic touches which show that it came from an eye-witness.

13. In which Gospel do we find Jesus most often at Jerusalem?

Ans.— The Gospel of John.

14. Is the first of these visits likely to be earlier or later than the date of the Sermon on the Mount?

Ans.— Earlier, because Jesus would not be likely to oppose openly the rulers of the Jews until he had given up the hope of influencing them to receive the new views of religion which he desired to have accepted. As Mr. Hale says in his article (quoted in November number of *Cheerful Letter*), Jesus does, in this history, what any reformer would be likely to do. He appeals first to the government, and, failing to convince them, turns to the people.

The Gospels in the early manuscript copies of the New Testament were arranged thus, Matthew, John, Luke, Mark.

[The latter part of Question 11 and Question 12 can be answered only according to individual ideas. The following books will be lent to any member of the Bible Class: "The Old Documents and the New Bible; or, An Easy Lesson for the People in Biblical Criticism" (only one copy). "Life in Palestine when Jesus lived," by J. Estlin Carpenter (two or three copies); "Deacon Herbert's Bible Class" (some copies of this to *give* to those who will make use of them); "Life and Times of Jesus, as narrated by Thomas Didymus."

This class may be joined at any time.

Names of students may be sent to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Entering now upon the study of the text of the Gospels, we may try a different plan of study,—printing an article in each number of the paper and list of questions referring to the same article. We should like the opinion of members of the class as to which plan is preferable.

The subject of our next lesson will be John the Baptist. If students read all that they can find on this subject before the next paper is published, it will add to the interest of the lesson.]

CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS.

6. Prehistoric literally means "before history." But it has a meaning of its own as given to that which goes back into a past of which we have no knowledge, even by tradition. It applies not only to still existing races, like the Irish or the Esquimaux, whose origin we know not, and whom the earliest traditions represent with much the same traits as now, but also to vanished races, whose history we try to build up from the remains and traces of their previous existence.

7, 8, 9. The prehistoric races of the United States are allied to the Mexicans, the Peruvians or Aztecs, and the Mayans. Of these the Mexican civilization seems to be considered rather the highest, though the Mayans of Yucatan carried carving and building to a higher degree of development than the others. The Mexicans, Zuñis or Pueblo

Indians, and perhaps the Navahoes, represent these civilizations, the Zuñis having traditions which would seem to ally them with Peruvian or Aztec ancestors; and they hold themselves distinct from the Mexicans around them in all their customs.

10. By North American Aborigines we understand the Indian tribes of our Territories and on our reservations.

11. The latest views consider them ethnologically as of Turanian or Asiatic-Tartar origin. They came from Asia by way of Bering's Straits, and spread over the whole country. They are thought to have been the mound-builders. Nomadic, they never advanced beyond the hunter stage of civilization.

12. Some of them may have reached the agricultural stage of civilization, and then by conquest been again reduced to hunters. Among the Mandan Indians there are said to be traditions that connect them with the Welsh descendants of Madoc in 1170.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P. O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'In His Name,'" etc., not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N. B.—Do not send *books* to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Any one who can send copies of the *Century*, the *Atlantic*, *Harper's Magazine*, *New England Magazine*, *Babyhood* (*Mother's Nursery Guide*), *Babyland*, the *Pansy*, *St. Nicholas*, *Harper's Young People*, *Wide Awake*, the *Christian Register*, *Christian Union*, or any good weekly or monthly periodical, will confer a favor by addressing the Book Club as above.

OFFERS.

The *Christian Register* (weekly) is offered by Mrs. J. R. Conant, 42 Marshall Street, Somerville, Mass.

The *Youth's Companion* and *Our Little Ones*, for several years past, are offered by Mrs. G. A. Sproule, 162 Pine Street, Bangor, Me.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in training the Young" by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The *Unitarian*, *Our Dumb Animals* (monthly), and the *Christian Register* for 1893, also six bound volumes of the *Christian Examiner*, are offered by Mrs. Wm. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

Mrs. Henry C. Weston, 177 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., will give and send the following books:—

"Short History of the English People," Green; "Literature and Dogma," Matthew Arnold; "Up the Rhine," Hood; "English Traits," "Representative Men," Emerson; "North America," Trollope; "Life of Baroness Bunsen," Hare; "Gray Days and Gold," Wm. Winter; "Deserted Village," Goldsmith; "The Princess," Tennyson; "Aurora Leigh," Mrs. Browning; "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers," Aytoun; "Rain Tales from the Hills," Kipling; "Saxe Holm Stories"; "Day and Night Stories," Sullivan; Jean Ingelow's Poems; "A Second Life," Mrs. Alexander; The Burgomaster's Wife," Ebers; "The Reproach of Annesley," Maxwell Grey; "Marjorie Daw," T. B. Aldrich.

Mrs. Allen Curtis, 277 Clarendon Street, Boston, Mass., offers the following books:—

"Tales of Algeria," Dumas; "Iduna," Hib-

bard; "Unhappy Loves of Men of Genius"; "John Ward, Preacher," Mrs. Deland; "Silken Threads"; "Jinrikisha Days," Scidmore; "Among my Books," J. R. Lowell; "Bracebridge Hall"; "The Vision of Echard," J. G. Whittier; "Mistress Beatrice Cope," Le Clerc; "Lady Audley's Secret," Braddon; "Asolando," Robert Browning; "The Vision of Sir Launfal," Lowell; "Makers of Florence," Mrs. Oliphant.

Miss Julia E. Ward, Hotel Brunswick, Boston, Mass., offers her copy of the *Nation* as it comes out.

The Lowell Branch of The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers back numbers of the *Youth's Companion* for several years. Address Miss Helen A. Whittier, 38 Kirk Street, Lowell, Mass.

The *Unitarian*, for 1892; *Woman's Journal*, 1892; "Nursery Health Tract: Diet for Young Children"; *Every Other Sunday* as it comes out. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass. Miss Clarke offers also the following novels: "Jane Eyre," "Romola," "Stepping Heavenward," "Doctor Antonio," "School Days at Rugby," "The Old Ma'amselle's Secret," "A Sage of Sixteen."

Books about birds, insects, plants, and minerals, lent. Borrowers to pay return postage, or, if unable to do so, they may send pressed plants to compensate for the same. Directions for collecting the plants will be given. Address Miss Cora H. Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

REQUESTS.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* is asked for by the following persons: Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler Co., N.Y.; Mrs. Josephine Braband, Sheboygan, Wis.; Mrs. Annie Wilson, 23 Crossman Street, Jamestown, N. Y.; Mrs. Helen M. Hutchinson, 101 River Street, Ypsilanti, Mich.; Mrs. W. C. Allison, Myrtle, Lincoln Co., Neb.; Addie Hyatt, 26 Stewart Ave., Norwalk, Conn.; Mrs. A. J. Barker, New Vineyard, Me.; Mrs. H. Rayner, 23 St. Anthonie's Alley, New Orleans, La.; Mrs. L. M. Stewart, Penza, Trumbull Co., Ohio; Mrs. I. N. Cardozo, Brainerd Institute, Chester, S.C.

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The *Christian Union* is asked for by Mrs. L. M. Stewart, Penza, Trumbull Co., Ohio, and Mrs. Josephine Braband, Sheboygan, Wis.

"Timothy Titcomb" is asked for by Mrs. Mellie J. Snyder, Brush Valley, Ind. Co., Penn.

The *New England Magazine* is asked for by Mr. Theo. D. Weed, Mason City, Iowa.

The *Cosmopolitan* is asked for by Mrs. A. R. Barber, Northfield, Mass.

Through the kindness of a friend I received a number of *The Cheerful Letter*. Through it I learned of the Exchange. May I not be allowed to make a request for some of its benefits? I am teaching in a lonely, mountainous district of Virginia, twenty-three miles from the railroad or any public library. I am very fond of reading good literature and of distributing the same after it is read. There are many persons around me who, if once interested in reading, would become regular subscribers, and in every way exert a more salutary influence in society, business, etc. My salary is meagre, and consequently does not permit me to indulge my own inclination in the way of obtaining the most desired magazines, etc. I should be thankful if some one would send me the *Century*, *Harper's*, or *Littell's Living Age*. . . . If the Exchange will send me literature, I will be glad to distribute it where it will do great good. Yours in

Christian charity, (Miss) Inez E. Quisenberry, Elk Creek, Grayson Co., Va.

(*Harper's* has already been sent to Miss Quisenberry.)

I am a little girl nine years old, and live on the wild prairie of Nebraska. If not asking too much, I would like if some one would send me little papers or books to read these long winter days. I have neither school, Sunday school, nor preaching to go to. Address, Myrtle Brown, Nesbit, Neb.

Through the kind consideration of a friend, I am so fortunate as to be offered *The Cheerful Letter*, and herewith tender many thanks. It is to me a messenger of happy hours which I hail with delight. I should be very thankful if I could get some commentaries for the New Testament, or any book designed to enlighten the study of the gospel, or a gospel song book with music, or any secular magazine of the *Century* or *Harper's* type, etc. Living as I do in comparative isolation from the world, being an invalid and confined for the last decade almost, reading is about all I am able to do, when opportunities are to be had. Longing for a ray of sunshine to dissipate the gloom of weary, lonesome hours, eventually lengthening into years, I should be so grateful for any sort of literature some one more fortunate would kindly send. I sincerely hope you will not be obliged to discontinue the beautiful messenger of comfort and good will, but may it be blessed and crowned with success. I am sincerely yours, A. L. Braband, Sheboygan, Wis.

(The Gospel Commentaries and a Hymn and Tune-book have been sent.)

Mrs. George A. Breck, 212 Duffy Street, Savannah, Ga., applied too late for the autobiographical notes called "Præterita," by John Ruskin, which were offered in the January number. Will any one who has this book to give away, or any other interesting biography, kindly send it to Mrs. Breck?

Every Other Sunday is asked for by a lady in New Mexico. The address will be furnished by Mrs. Henry F. Smith, Concord, Mass.

Mrs. Chas. Westmoreland, Eubank, Beaver Co., Okl., would like Edna Lyall's "Knight Errant," also any of Bret Harte's books. Also would be glad to have any good periodicals sent to her regularly, as well as some weekly newspaper.

Will the person who sent me copies of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the one who sent the package of magazines in November to be forwarded to three "shut-ins," please send me their names and addresses? Address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

LETTERS.

Kind Friend,—I wanted to write to you long before this, but my four little ones have been sick,—not seriously, but enough to make them fretful and troublesome, especially at night. If we had comfortable houses, well heated, it would not be such a task to care for sick children at night. They have had bad colds with sore throat, and at night bad coughs; but I am thankful to say they are much better.

Our dear little *Cheerful Letter* comes to me regularly, and cheers many a dark hour. The ladies are all so good. Many a dull hour has been brightened since the little *Cheerful Letter* found its way into my home, and I know there are many more careworn mothers who can tell the same story. My friend, to whom you kindly offer to send it, is ——. Yes, she is a young mother,—has five little ones, and the *oldest* only seven years. She is such a dear little woman; always looks on the bright side of everything.

My nearest neighbor, a strong, healthy man, has been laid up for three months with a compound fracture of the leg; and I guess he would have gone crazy, only for reading. He devoured everything greedily, so my little supply was in good demand. He is only now able to hobble around on crutches.

I do so want to thank you for all the favors I have received "in His name." The *Christian Register* which I receive I cannot bear to lay down until I have read every word. I cannot sit up but a few minutes at a time, and it takes me so long to answer a letter. My plants are just lovely, thanks to the care my husband gives them. I have so many things to be thankful for! The sun is shining to-day. I have had the doctor three times this week, the cancer crowds on my lungs so.

My bird is singing. He is happy to see the sun. May you receive all blessings for making sunshine in shadowy places is the wish of a shut-in. Yours, "in His name."

P.S.—I send to other poor shut-ins reading matter after I have had it. I hope, if I am spared, to be able to help in the good work; but it has been hard on the poor this winter.

[As we have other correspondents in Nebraska, the editor will mention that the following letter is from a new member, one not heard from before. We did not feel at liberty to print her name without permission, but will give it to any one who asks for it.]

Dear Friend,—I notice in *The Cheerful Letter* which a very kind lady sent me—a stranger to me, but I know she must be kind, or she would not have sent or troubled herself about me, away off here on the lone prairies, almost too poor to live, but living in hopes of building up a home for my little ones—that you will give three sermons on the future life. I would be glad to have them, for that is what we all should build up, for our earthly lives are full of trials; and you folks who have plenty and to spare cannot realize what trials we poor homesteaders have to battle with in these long winters. We have no church nor Sunday-school, and we poor mothers have not much to cheer us; but I suppose we should look on the bright side, but it is pretty hard, when you have not even comfortable clothes. I would be glad to wear clothes that many folk throw away; and my little ones— I will not tell you any more, for I cry sometimes until I think my heart will break. Please send any reading matter and anything you can to help us along. I will receive it in a good spirit, and thank God for it.—*Nebraska, February 6.*

Dear Friend,—I have sent my name to Miss Langmaid, thus becoming one of you, I hope. I received a sample copy of *The Cheerful Letter* in October, but have not been able to write until now. I have been an invalid for over six years. I am making a braided rug. Will all who can send me worsted material toward it? Can any of the readers send me sassafras bark? I will give them my sincere thanks, which is all I have. I dearly love to read, but I have asked enough. Sincerely, Florence Criste, Madeira, Ohio.

I saw your letter in the February number of the *Housewife*. I am not just a shut-in by sickness, but am never well, and live out here in Kansas where neighbors are few and far between. My nearest neighbor is two and a half miles away; post-office, five and a half miles; school-house, two miles. I am the mother of ten children. The oldest is seventeen, the baby eighteen months; and, when I tell you that I do all the work, you will know that I am a shut-in from necessity. I lead a very lonely life, although it is a very busy one. The children and I love reading; but, as this is a new country, and we are trying to make a home, money is very scarce, and reading matter is never to be thought of. If you have any magazines or novels, the girls and boys would be very thankful; and you need not be afraid, we always share with our neighbors, as they always do with us. Do not send us any *Youth's Companions*, as a neighbor who lives five miles from here always lends us hers when she is done with it. Mrs. R. H. Bergen, Manchester, Kan.

Dear Madam,—I take the liberty of sending in my name, as I very much wish to have a few correspondents, either English or German. I live here all alone in the woods, and see and hear nothing of what is going on in the world. I am an invalid. I am laid up now with a severe hurt caused by a fall. I am fifty-one years of age. I find it pretty hard, so I thought I would ask you to take my name down for correspondents. Hoping to hear from you, I remain, truly yours, Mrs. R. Wirths, Burrsville, N.J.

Dear Madam,—I saw your very kind letter in the February Chat-box, asking for the names of shut-ins. As this is my first number of *Housewife*, of course I have not my name in the list, though I have requested to have it put in now, so I thought I would write and see if you would add my name to your Cheerful Letter Exchange. My mother and I are both shut-ins. I mention a few trifles we would be glad of,—reading,—what would a shut-in do without it!—odd buttons with shanks, remnants of zephyr, or material for crazy-work, post-marks or flower-seeds, or anything for a little girl of four

years. Any of these little things will lighten a hard lot, or we would be glad of crocheting to do. Anna May, Box 7, Cinnaminson, N.J.

Thank you *very much* for copies of *The Cheerful Letter*. I have been shut in by ill health and care of baby nearly all winter. Would be very glad to become a member of your society, and will send my name to the proper address and a subscription to the paper as soon as I can spare the money. . . . I will lend the books to two or three families here who appreciate good reading, and then send to another town where I know of others who would be very glad indeed to have the reading, as they cannot afford to buy books. I have a few paper-covered books and magazines which I will list for the club as soon as possible. Yours, Mrs. R. F. A. Williams, Abington, Conn.

Noticing your kind letter in February *Housewife*, I send you my address, hoping you will remember me with reading matter. I like light literature and magazines. Have been an invalid nearly eleven years,—am confined to my bed a great deal of the time,—live in the country, and am left alone while children are at school, and husband at work, and am very lonesome when I am unable to do any light work. Cannot afford to buy much reading, and would be more than thankful if some kind heart would send me anything in that line, which I shall take pleasure in passing along to other shut-ins as far as I am able. Mary K. Dickey, Peru, Miami Co., Ind.

Dear Miss Clarke,—Some one sent me a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* last week, and I enjoyed it so much. Wish I was able to subscribe to it, but am not. In this copy I saw your offer of books, and write to say that I will be so glad of any or all of those offered. I have a copy of "Stepping Heavenward." I am a young mother, with three little children, the youngest not three weeks old. My health is very poor, and reading is my only recreation; but I can't afford to buy books, so you may imagine what those you offer will be to me. I know no one would enjoy them more, and I will gladly pass them on to others. I do all my own work when my health permits, and nurse my baby, but am never strong enough to visit any after doing all this, so I think I can truly call myself a "shut-in." Mrs. J. Frank Anderson, P.O. Crewe, Va.

Dear Friend,—I have just received *The Cheerful Letter*, and see your kind offer of books, and would like "Patience Strong's Outings." If you wish to print what I have written in regard to *The Cheerful Letter*, you can do so. The good that *The Cheerful Letter* is doing is like space, cannot be measured. It is a wonderful, noble work that you are doing, and I pray for the Father to bless you a hundred-fold in all your efforts. Everything that is offered is such choice, good reading. Cordially yours, Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler Co., N.Y.

[Miss Clarke has received a number of requests in response to her offer in the February *Cheerful Letter*. Several shut-ins have asked for "Patience Strong's Outings," and we will suggest that other members should offer that book, writing to Mrs. Millet. Others asked for "The House of Seven Gables," "The Scarlet Letter," "Christie Johnstone," and "Peg Woffington." The two books by Hawthorne may be bought now for a very low price at Houghton & Dutton's, and in a good edition. The two by Charles Reade (paper edition) for ten cents. Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder Co., Col., has not received the books by Mrs. Stowe for which she asked, "Old Town Folks," "We and our Neighbors," "My Wife and I." Will not some member or circle send them?]

OFFERS.

(The following offers came a little late, so they are inserted here.)

Mrs. Frank J. Eustis, Highland Street, Cambridge, would be glad to send *The Youth's Companion* to any one who desires it.

The "In His Name" Circle of King's Daughters begs leave to offer the following list of books for the Book Club of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. Applications should be sent to Miss A. J. Raymond, 84 Ellery Street, Cambridge, Mass. *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1890; *Youth's Companion*, 1888; *Silver Cross* (a King's Daughters magazine), 1889; *Wide Awake*, 1887; odd numbers of *Every Other Sunday*, from 1888 to 1892.

A lady offers the Book Club *Our Dumb Animals* monthly, and several scrap-books with black-and-white pictures and colored. Address Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston (as the giver prefers not to have her name printed).

MISCELLANEOUS.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Dear Miss ——,— May I suggest that a notice be printed in *The Cheerful Letter* that my offer of the *Ladies' Home Journal* is accepted? Almost every day the mail brings answers to that offer, asking that the paper may be sent.

Ans.—Please send all those requests to the Secretary of the Book Club, according to directions printed in each number. We want all those addresses to print in the Book Club, that the periodical desired may be supplied from some other quarter.

"What contributions do you desire for *The Cheerful Letter*?

Ans.—First and most, we desire letters from our far-off correspondents, telling us something about themselves,—letters that we may print in *The Cheerful Letter*, signed with the name of the writer.

Next, we want short articles, answering the questions in the Mothers' Council, and on the questions in the Bible Class.

Third, we want more of our Cheerful Letter Exchange members to offer books in the Book Club, especially good books on American history.

"How do you know, when a request for a book has been made by a shut-in, whether she has received it or not?"

Ans.—We do not know, unless the giver sends the secretary a P. O. card, offering to send that book or stating that she has sent it (we should prefer the former). We have asked several times that this should be done.

N.B.—*Do not send books or papers to us.* See directions in Book Club.

To become a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, it is necessary:—

First, either to be a lonely person, an invalid, a young mother (or a mother of any age, who feels enough interest to desire to join the society), or to be in sympathy with these, and desire to write letters, send reading, or cheer their lives in any way.

Second, to send your names to our secretary, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., saying that you desire to become a member.

It is also desirable (although not necessary for *each individual*) to take *The Cheerful Letter*, as this is the medium of communication.

Will all those friends who are now sending magazines or papers regularly to any one be kind enough to write to Miss Bertha Langmaid (2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.), giving the address of the recipient as well as the name of the periodical and of the sender?

Will those who write us letters mention whether they are willing that the signature of the writer should be inserted in the paper with the letter? We are sometimes in doubt, especially when the writer, although referring to *The Cheerful Letter*, writes to the editor in a friendly, personal way. Such letters would often interest readers; and we like to make use of them when permitted.

In sending articles for insertion in *The Cheerful Letter*, please remember to write *on one side only* of your paper.

The editor regrets and apologizes for the fact that she can no longer answer all the personal letters she receives. It has become impossible.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

New Subscribers.—Please send *subscriptions* for the paper to Miss F. L. Close, 3 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Articles for the paper may be sent for the present to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.